

MODERN STANDARD DRAMA.

EDITED BY EPES SARGENT

No. LII.

E V A D N E :

OR,

THE STATUE.

A Play

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY RICHARD SHEIL.

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c.

NEW-YORK:

WM. TAYLOR & CO., 18 Ann-Street.

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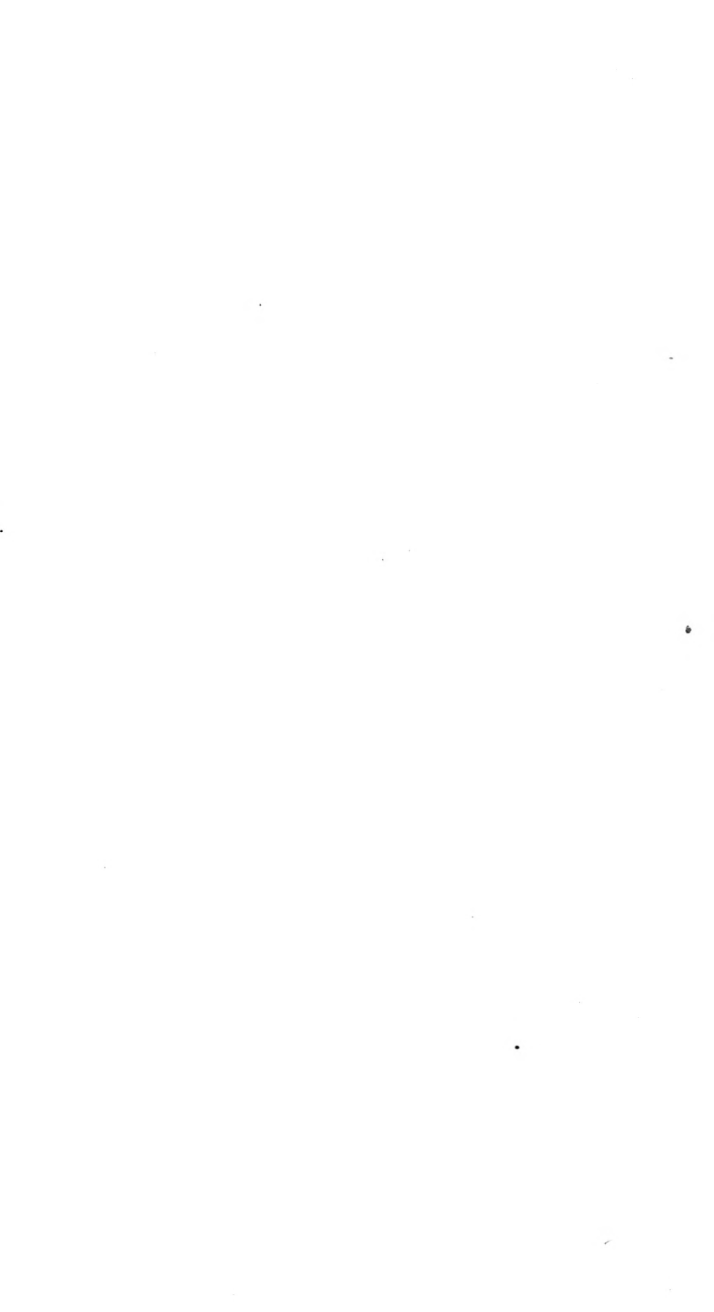
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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

THE following is the preface of the author of the London edition of this play, published by Murray, in 1819 :—

“ The author has employed a part of the fable of Shirley’s ‘ *Traitor*,’ in the construction of his plot. In that tragedy, a kinsman, and favorite of the Duke of Florence, contrives to excite in him a dishonorable passion for the sister of a Florentine nobleman, as the means of procuring the murder of the Duke by the hand of the injured brother, and thus opening the way for his own elevation to the throne.

“ To that extent only, the plot of this tragedy is derived from Shirley. The incidents, situations, distribution, characters, and language, such as they are, the author hopes he may be pardoned for observing, are his own. It will, perhaps, be thought, that this detracts from his claim to the merit of originality—he does not think so. No one contends against the originality of ‘ *Douglas*,’ because Home took his plot from an old ballad, and even profited by the ‘ *Merope*’ of Voltaire. Rowe’s ‘ *Fair Penitent*’ is a still stronger case; that fine tragedy is modelled on Massinger’s ‘ *Fatal Dowry*;’ Otway and Southerne rarely invented their plots.

“ The author trusts his introduction of these names will not be misinterpreted. He mentions them for the purpose of justifying himself, by the authority of their example.”

It was when a young man, and engaged in the study of the law, that Mr. Shiel betook himself to dramatic writing, with the view of increasing an income, which was by no means too abundant for his wants. The success of “ *The Apostate*,” his first production, was encouraging; and “ *Bellamira*” and “ *Evadne*” soon followed. The last named-play is that by which he is most favorably known in the theatrical, if not the literary world. It was written for Miss O’Niell, who, in the part of the heroine, justified the author’s estimate of her powers, and won new laurels for herself and him. The following remarks upon the play and its performance, by one who witnessed one of its earliest representations, seem to us just and appropriate :—

“ To the plot and the incidents, by which it is worked out, we can offer almost unqualified praise. It has quite enough of unity for all the purposes of the drama. The guilty ambition of *Ludovico* is the spring which sets every part in motion. Every incident flows naturally and intelligibly from its immediate and assigned cause, and all conduce to bear him on nearer towards the object of his desires---the crown---till at length, in the last scene, he is on the point of seizing it—but at the very moment when he seems to feel its golden round upon his brow, and in imagination presses the sceptre in his grasp, retribution falls upon him like a thunderbolt, and closes his career.

“ The events on which the chief interest of the piece depends, are brought about with great skill. They are every one made ‘probable to thinking.’ It is impossible for *Vicentio* to resist the evidence which *Ludovico* offers him of *Evadne’s* falsehood, when coupled with the changing of the pictures—it is impossible for *Colonna* to refuse the office which *Ludovico* forces upon him, of killing the *King*—and it is impossible for the *King* himself—young and not wholly depraved as he is—to withstand the appeal which *Evadne* makes to him, in the shadowy presence of her great and glorious ancestors. The minor incidents, too—the treachery of *Olivia*—the combat between *Colonna* and *Vicentio*—the intended sacrifice of his hand, which *Vicentio* makes to *Olivia*, &c., are all absolutely essential to the progress of the plot, and yet none have the appearance of being forced, or out of place.

“ The charm of the piece is the character of *Evadne*. She is a woman in the truest and strictest, yet most delightful sense of the term. Love, trusting and endearing love, is the very breath of her existence. She has deliberately chosen *Vicentio* to be lord of her life—the home and temple of her thoughts and affections—and nothing can turn them aside from their course. He may discard *her*, but she cannot forsake *him*.

“ Of the language of the play we must speak in terms of censure. It is everywhere disfigured by marks of feebleness and haste. The imagery is frequently harsh and extravagant, or far-fetched and affected, or made up of mere commonplaces.

“ It would be difficult for a play to be better acted throughout,

than this was on its first presentation at Covent Garden. Mr. Macready's *Ludovico* displayed finished judgment in every part. Some passages of it were very fine—particularly those in which he resumes his natural haughty and ambitious character, after he has been hypocritically humble before the *King*. Mr. Young played *Colonna* in a fine, free, loose, oriental style ; and he gave the declamatory parts with great power. The young and high-spirited *Vicentio* was also extremely well adapted to Mr. C. Kemble. But Miss O'Neill in *Evadne*, was really and truly herself. The character is better suited to her powers than any she has yet played, except, perhaps, *Julia* and *Desdemona*."

This play is rather better known to the frequenters of the provincial theatres than to those of the metropolis ; but it has merits and capabilities, which will long redeem it from obscurity. Remarkable effect is given to the character of *Evadne* by Mrs. Shaw, whose fine talents ought to be oftener exerted in this and kindred parts. This play was originally produced at Covent Garden, in 1818.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Covent Garden, 1818.</i>	<i>Bowery, 1817.</i>
<i>The King of Naples</i>	Mr. Abbott.	Mr. Jordan.
<i>Ludovico, his favourite</i>	" Macready.	" Neafie.
<i>Colonna</i>	" Young.	" Booth.
<i>Vicentio</i>	" C. Kemble.	" Clarke.
<i>Spalatro</i>	" Connor.	" Venue.
<i>Evadne</i>	Miss O'Neill.	Mrs. Shaw.
<i>Olivia</i>	Mrs. Faucit.	" Madivon.

SCENE—*Naples.*

COSTUMES.

THE KING.—King's shirt of royal purple velvet, reaching nearly to the ankle, handsomely trimmed with gold leather and spangles, also with ermine, hanging sleeves, with tight ones under; richly trimmed over-robe of dark green velvet and gold, white silk tights, black velvet shoes, and handsome fillet of jewels, &c.

LUDOVICO.—Cream-coloured tight pantaloons, trimmed up the sides with red and gold, jacket and fly to match, same style as Iago's, white plumes and cap, yellow Hessian boots, gold tassels, sword, and gauntlets.

COLONNA.—Same style as Ludovico, but scarlet tights trimmed with gold, yellow jacket and fly, trimmed with red and gold, cap and red plumes, yellow Hessian boots, sword and white gauntlets.

VICENTIO.—White tight pantaloons, white jacket and fly, same as Ludovico, all handsomely trimmed with red and gold, white hat and plumes, white gloves, hand ruffles and sword.

SPALATRO.—Scarlet shirt, trimmed round the bottom with gold, amber scarf, bay and white plumes, white tights, boots, sword and gauntlets.

CONSPIRATORS.—*Ibid.*

GUARDS.—Armour, shirts, leggings, and helmets.

EVADNE.—Pearl white satin boddice and train, all richly trimmed with gold.

OLIVIA.—Same as Evadne's, but of scarlet velvet.

PAGES.—Buff tunics, trimmed with black and silver, white silk tights, ankle boots and white scarfs.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R., means *Right*; L., *Left*; C., *Centre*; R. C., *Right of Centre*; L. C., *Left of Centre*.

E V A D N E ;

OR, THE STATUE.

A C T I.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of the King of Naples.*

The KING, SPALATRO, and Ten Courtiers, Six Guards, and Two Banners, discovered.

King. DIDST say the Marquis of Colonna prays
Admission to our presence ?

Spal. Ay, my liege ;
He stands in the ante-chamber, with a brow
As stern as e'er was knitted in the folds
Of rancorous discontent.

King. I have noted oft
His absence from the court, the which I deem
His envy of our true Ludovico.

Spal. Deem it no little benefit, my liege ;
His deep and murky smile, his gathered arms,
In whose close pride he folds himself ; his raw
And pithy apothegms of scorn, have made him
Our laughter and our hatred ; we are all
Grown weary of this new Diogenes,
Who rolls his hard and new philosophy
Against all innocent usage of the court.

King. We must not bid him hence : he has a sister—

Spal. The fair Evadne !

King. Fairer than the morn !
Who has not seen her, knows of beauty less
Than blind men of Aurora. For her sake
We give him ample scope, and we are glad
He comes to visit us.

Colonna. [Without.] I'll hear no more.
Colonna does not often importune
With his unwelcome presence. Let me pass:
For once, I must be heard.

Enter COLONNA, L., followed by two Courtiers.

My liege!

1st Cour. Hold back!

2d Cour. What right hast thou to rush before the sight
Of sacred royalty?

Col. The right that all
Good subjects ought to have: to do him service.
My liege— [Courtiers retire L., and Spal. crosses to R.]

King. You are welcome;
And would you had brought your lovely sister, too.

Col. My sister, did you say! my sister, sire?
She is not fit for courts; "she would be called—
'For she has something left of nature still,—
'A simple creature here. She cannot cast
'Unholy glances from a sidelong eye,
'Or give her untouched body to the wreath
'Of mazy dances, where all decency
'Is lost in pleasure's 'wildered labyrinth.
"She is not fit for courts," and I have hope
She never will. But, let it pass:—I come
To implore a favour of you.

King. Whatsoe'er
Colonna prays, sure cannot be refused.

Col. The favour that I ask is one, my liege,
That princes often find it hard to grant.
Tis simply this—that you will hear the truth.

King. Proceed, and play the monitor, my lord.

Col. I see your courtiers here do stand amazed—
Of them I first would speak. There is not one
Of this wide troop of glittering parasites,
That circle you, as priests surround their god,
With sycophantic incense, but in soul
Is your base foe! These smilers here, my liege,
Whose dimples seem a sort of honeycomb
Filled and o'erflowing with suavity;
These soft melodious flatterers, "my liege,
"That flourish in the flexibility

"Of their soft countenances, are the vermin
"That haunt a prince's ear with the false buzz
"Of villanous assentation." These are they
Who from your mind have flouted every thought
Of the great weal of the people. These are they
Who from your ears have shut the public cry,
And with the poisoned gales of flattery
Create around you a foul atmosphere
Of unresounding denseness, through the which
Their loud complaints cannot reverberate,
And perish ere they reach you.

King. Who complains?
Who dares complain of us?

Col. All dare complain
Behind you—I, before you! Do not think,
Because you load your people with the weight
Of camels, they possess the camel's patience.
A deep groan labours in the nation's heart;
The very calm and stillness of the day
Gives augury of the earthquake. All without
Is as the marble smooth, and all within
Is rotten as the carcase it contains.
Though ruin knock not at the palace gate.
Yet will the palace gate unfold itself
To ruin's felt-shod tread.

King. [*Aside.*] Insolent villain

Col. "Your gorgeous banquets, your high feasts of gold,
"Which the four quarters of the rifled world
"Heap with their ravished luxuries; your pomps,
"Your palaces, and all the sumptuousness
"Of painted royalty will melt away,
"As in a theatre the glittering scene
"Doth vanish with the shifter's magic hand,
"And the mock pageant perishes." My liege,
A single virtuous action hath more worth
Than all the pyramids; and glory writes
A more enduring epitaph upon
One generous deed, than the sarcophagus
In which Sesostrius meant to sleep.

Spal. [*Coming forward.*] Forbear!
It is a subject's duty to arrest
Thy rash and blasphemous speech.

King. Let him speak on!

The monarch who can listen to Colonna,
Is not the worthless tyrant he would make me.

Col. I deem you not that tyrant: if I did—
No! Nature, framing you, did kindly mean,
And o'er your heart hath sprinkled many drops
Of her best charities. But you are led
From virtue and from wisdom far away,
By men, whose every look's a lie; whose hearts
Are a large heap of cankers, and of whom
The chief is a rank traitor!

King. Traitor! whom meanest thou?

Col. Your favourite, your minister, my liege;
That smooth-faced hypocrite, that—

King. Here he comes!

Col. It is the traitor's self: I am glad of it,
That to his face I may confront—

Enter LUDOVICO, R., and advances rapidly to the King.

Lud. My liege,

I hasten to your presence, to inform you—

[*Starting.*] Colonna here!

C.L. The same—Colonna's here!

And if you wish to learn his theme of speech,
Learn that he spoke of treason and of you!

Lud. Did I not stand before the hallowed eye
Of majesty, I would teach thee with my sword
How to reform thy phrase; but I am now
In my king's presence, and, with awe-struck soul,
As if within religion's peaceful shrine,
Humbly I bend before him.—What, my liege,
Hath this professor of austerity,
And practiser of slander, vomited
Against your servant's honour?

King. He hath called you—

Col. A traitor! and I warn you to beware
Of the false viper nurtured in your heart.
He has filled the city with a band of men,
By fell allegiance sworn unto himself.
There are a thousand ruffians, at his word
Prepared to cut our throats; the city swarms
With murderers' faces; and though treason now

Moves like a muffled dwarf, 'twill speedily
Swell to a blood-robed giant! If, my liege,
What I have said doth not unfilm^d your eye,
'Twere vain to tell you more. "And I desire not
"To hear a traitor doling out before you
"His fluent protestation, till at last,
"With insolent mockery of attested Heaven,
"From the believing ear of royalty
"He sucks its brains out. I have said, my liege,
"And tried to interrupt security
"Upon her purple cushion; he, perhaps,
"Will find some drowsy syrup to lay down
"Her opening eyelids into sleep again,
"And call back slumber with a lullaby
"Of sweetest adulation." Fare you well!

Lud. Hold back!

Col. Not at your summons, my good lord.
The courtly air doth not agree with me,
And I respire it painfully.—My liege,
Hear my last words: Beware Ludovico!

Lud. Villain, come back!

Col. I wear a sword, my lord. [Exit, L.

Lud. He flies before me; and the sight of him
He dares accuse, came like the morning sun
On the night-walking enemy of mankind,
That shrinks before the day-light. Yes, he fled,
And I would straight pursue him, and send back,
On my sword's point, his falsehoods to his heart;
But that I here, before the assembled court,
Would vindicate myself. A traitor! who,
In any action of Ludovico,
Finds echo to that word?

King. I cannot think
Thou hast repaid me with ingratitude.

Lud. I do not love to make a boisterous boast
Of my past services, and marshal fo
In glittering array the benefit
That I have done my sovereign. What I did,
Was but my duty. Yet would I inquire,
If he who has fought your battles, and hath made
A very thrall of victory; who oft
Has back to Naples from the field of fight

Led your triumphant armies, "while the breeze
 "Spread out the royal banner, with its fold
 "Of floating glory, and yourself exclaimed,
 "'Twas unprofaned by one small drop of blood;
 "If he, who from your shoulders has ta'en off
 "The heavy mass of empire, to relieve
 "His sovereign from the ponderous load of rule,
 "And leave you but its pleasures"—he whose hand
 Hath lined the oppressive diadem with down,
 And ta'en its pressure from the golden round;—
 If he, whose cheek hath at the midnight lamp
 Grown pale with study of his prince's weal,
 Is like to be a traitor?—who, my liege,
 Hath often, like the daylight's god, transpierced
 The hydra-headed monster of rebellion,
 And stretched it bleeding at your feet? who oft
 Hath from the infuriate people exorcised
 The talking demon, *Liberty*, "and choked
 "The voice of clamorous demagogues"?—I dare
 To tell you, 'twas Ludovico!

King. It was.

Lud. Who calls me traitor? He whose breath doth
 taint

Whate'er it blows on—he—

But ask yourself, my lord, if I be mad?

For were I that, that he would make Ludovico,
 The cells of frenzy, not the scaffold's plank,
 Would best beseech my treason. "In your love

'My fortunes grow and flourish unto Heaven;

'And I should win by treason but the lead

'Of the world's execration, while the fierce

'And ravenous vulture of remorse would tear

'The vitals of my soul, and make my heart

"Its black, immortal banquet!—I a traitor!

"At first, I only meant to scorn; but now,

"The bursting passion hath o'ermastered me,

"And my voice chokes in anguish." Oh, my liege,

Your giving audience to this rancorous man,

Who envies me the greatness of your smile,

Hath done me wrong, and stabs me through and through

A traitor!—your Ludovico!

King. My lord—

Lud. [*Kneels.*] Here is my heart! If you have any mercy,

Strike through that heart, and as the blood flows forth,
Drown your suspicions in the purple stream.

King. Arise, Ludovico, and do not think
I have harboured in my breast a single thought
That could dishonour thee. [*Raises and embraces him*]

Lud. My royal master!
The power of gratitude mounts from my heart
And rushes to mine eyes, that are too apt
To play the woman with me. See, they are falling—
Oh! let them not profane your sacred cheek,
But bathe my prince's feet.

King. Ludovico,
We have wronged thee, not by doubt,
But by our sufferance of Colonna's daring—
Whom from my sight into the dungeon's depth
I had flung, but that I hope—Let us apart—
[*Draws Ludovico aside in front, L.*]

But that I hope, Ludovico, that yet
I may possess me of his sister's charms.

Lud. There you have struck upon the inmost spring
Of all Colonna's hate; for in obedience
To your high will, I humbly made myself
Your pleasure's minister, and to her ear
I bore your proffered love, which, he discovering,
Hath tried to root me from my prince's heart—

King. Where thou shalt ever flourish! But, Ludovico,
But thou hast told her!—Is there hope, my friend?

Lud. She shall be yours—nay, more—and well you
know

That you may trust your servant—not alone
Colonna's lovely sister shall be yours:
But, mark my speech, Colonna's self shall draw
The chaste white curtains from her virgin bed,
And lead you to her arms!

King. What! her fierce brother
Yield his consent?

Lud. Inquire not how, my liege,
I would accomplish this—trust to my pledge—
This very night.

King. To-night! Am I so near

To heaven, Ludovico ?

Lud. You are, my liege.

[*Aside.*] To-night upon the breast of paradise
You shall most soundly sleep.

King. My faithful friend !

And dost thou say, Colonna will himself— ?

Lud. Colonna's self shall bear her to your arms,
And bid her on to dalliance.

King. Oh, my friend,

Thou art the truest servant that e'er yet
Tended his sovereign's wish : but dost not fear,
Her purposed marriage with Vicentio
May make some obstacle ?

Lud. I have recalled him
From Florence, whither, as ambassador,
In honourable exile he was sent.

King. Recalled him ! 'Twas to interrupt his love
That he was sent.

Lud. My projects need his coming.

For I intend to make Vicentio
An instrument to crown you with her charms !

King. How shall I bless thee, my Ludovico ?
Dost thou think

'Tis strange I pine for her—but why inquire
Of thee, who once wert kindled by her charms !

Lud. My liege ! [*A little disturbed.*]

King. She did prefer Vicentio.

Lud. She shall prefer you to Vicentio.

King. My dear Ludovico, within my soul
More closely will I wear thee !
Tell her we'll shower all honour on her head.
And here, Ludovico, to testify
That we have given ourselves, bear to her heart
This image of her king !

Lud. I am in all your servant.

King. My Ludovico,
We never can reward thee ! Come, my friends,
[*Crosses, R.*]

Let's to some fresh imagined sport, and wile
The languid hours in some device of joy,
To help along the lazy flight of time,
And quicken him with pleasure. My Ludovico !

Remember! [*Flourish.—Exeunt King and ten of the Courtiers, R.—Banners and Guards, R. U. E.—Spalatro and four other Conspirators remain behind with Ludovico.*]

Lud. He is gone,
And my unloosened spirit dares again
To heave within my bosom!—Oh, Colonna,
With an usurious vengeance I'll repay thee,
And cure the talking devil in thy tongue.
[*To Spalatro.*—Give me thy hand, and let thy pulse again
Beat with a temperate and healthful motion,
Of full security. We are safe, my friends,
And in the genius of Ludovico,
An enterprise shall triumph.

Spal. We began to tremble when you entered—but
full soon
With admiration we beheld you tread
Secure the steeps of ruin, and preserve us.

Lud. That damned Colonna!—by the glorious star
Of my nativity, I do not burn
For empire with a more infuriate thirst,
Than for revenge!

Spal. My poniard's at your service.

[*First and Second Conspirators half draw their daggers.*]

Lud. Not for the world, my friends!
I'll turn my vengeance to utility,
And must economize my hate—Whom think you
Have I marked out assassin of the King?

Spal. Piero, perchance—he strikes the poniard deep.

Lud. A better hand at it.

Spal. Bartolo, then—

He pushes the stiletto to the heart.

Lud. No!

Spal. Then yourself will undertake the deed.

Lud. That were against all wisdom—No, my friends,
Colonna—

Spal. What, Colonna?—he that now
Accused you here?

Lud. Colonna!—

Spal. 'Tis impossible!—

From his great father he inherited
A sort of passion in his loyalty;

In him it mounts to folly.

Lud. Yet, Spalatro,
I'll make a murderer of him.
Your leave awhile, my friends.—[*Exeunt Conspirators.*]

Know you not,
He has a sister?

Spal. Yes, the fair Evadne,
You once did love yourself.

Lud. There thou hast touched me.
And I am weak enough to love her yet,
If that indeed be love that doth consume me :
It is a sort of monster in my heart,
Made up of horrid contrarities !
She scorns me for that smooth Vicentio—
Not only does he thwart me in my love,
But, well I know his influence in the state
Would, when the King is sent to paradise,
Be cast between me and the throne—he dies !—
Colonna too shall perish, and the crown
Shall with Evadne's love be mine.

Enter PAGE, L.

How now ?

Page. My lord, the Lady Olivia
Waits on your highness.

Lud. I desired her here,
And straight I will attend her. [Exit Page, L.
With a straw

A town may be consumed, and I employ
This woman's passion for Vicentio,
As I would use a poisoned pin, to kill.

Spal. She long hath loved Vicentio.

Lud. He shall wed her—
And from the hand of Hymen, death shall snatch
The nuptial torch, and use it for his own !
I haste me to her presence.
[Takes out the King's picture.] Come, fair bauble,
Thou now must be employed.—[To Spal.] Dost thou not
think,
Even in this image, that he bears the soft
And wanton aspect with the which he bid me
To cater for his villainous appetite—

And with what luxury?—Evadne's charms!
Evadne that I love!

Spal. But didst thou not
Thyself evoke that passion in his breast?

Lud. I did, 'tis true—but for mine own success.
I hate him!
There is the very face with which he first
Poured his unholy wishes in mine ear—
Ha! dost thou smile upon me?—I will turn
Those glittering eyes, where love doth now inhabit,
To two dark, hollow palaces, for death
To keep his mouldering state in.
He dares to hope that I will make myself
The wretched officer of his desires,
And smooth the bed for his lascivious pleasures—
But I full soon will teach his royalty,
The beds I make are lasting ones, and lie
In the dark chambers of eternity! [Exeunt, L.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Room in the Palace.

Enter OLIVIA and LUDOVICO, R.

Lud. Dispose of it as I instructed you;
[Giving her the King's picture,
You know that I have pledged myself to make
Vicentio yours. To-day yourself have given
The means to turn that promise into deed.

Oliv. My own heart
Tells me, 'tis a bad office I have ta'en;
But this unhappy passion drives me on,
And makes my soul your thrall.—Thus I have crept,
Obedient to your counsels, meanly crept
Into Evadne's soft and trusting heart,
And coiled myself around her—Thus, my lord,
Have I obtained the page of amorous sighs
That you enjoined me to secure—I own

'Twas a false deed, but I am gone too far
To seek retreat, and will obey you still.

Lud. And I will crown your passion with the flowers
Of Hymen's yellow garland—Trust me, Olivia,
That once dissevered from Evadne's love,
He'll soon be taught to prize your nobler frame,
And more enkindled beauty—Well, 'tis known,
Ere he beheld the sorceress,
He deemed you fairest of created things,
And would have proffered love, had not—

Oliv. I pray you,
With gems of flattery do not disturb
The fount of bitterness within my soul;
For dropped though ne'er so lightly, they but stir
The poisoned waters as they fall.—I have said
I will obey you.

Lud. With this innocent page,
Will I light up a fire within Vicentio,—
But you must keep it flaming:—I have ta'en
Apt means to drive him into jealousy,
By scattering rumours (which have reached his ear)
Before he comes to Naples,—e'en in Florence
Have I prepared his soft and yielding mind
To take the seal that I would fix upon it.
I do expect him with the fleeting hour,—
For to my presence he must come to bear
His embassy's commission, and be sure
He leaves me with a poison in his heart,
Evadne's lips shall never suck away.

Oliv. Then will I hence, and, if 'tis possible,
Your bidding shall be done.—Vicentio!

Enter VICENTIO, R.

Vic. Hail to my lord!

Lud. Welcome, Vicentio!

I have not clasped your hand this many a day!
Welcome from Florence. In your absence, sir,
Time seemed to have lost his feathers.

Vic. It was kind
To waste a thought upon me.—Fair Olivia,
Florence hath dimmed mine eyes, or I must else
Have seen a sunbeam sooner.—[*Crosses, c.*]—Fair Olivia,

How does your lovely friend ?

Oliv. What friend, my lord ?

Vic. I trust naught evil hath befallen Evadne,
That you should feign to understand me not.
How does my beautiful and plighted love ?

Oliv. How does she, sir ? I pray you, my good lord,
To ask such tender question of the King. [*Exit, L.*]

Vic. [*Aside.*] What meant she by the King ?

Lud. You seem, Vicentio,
O'ershadowed with reflection—should you
Not have used some soft detaining phrase to one,
Who should at least be pitied ?

Vic. I came here
To re-deliver to your hands, my lord,
The high commission of mine embassy,
That long delayed my marriage. You, I deem
My creditor, in having used your sway
In my recall to Naples.

Lud. In return for such small service,
I hope
That you will not forget Ludovico,
When, in the troop of thronging worshippers,
At distance you behold his stooping plume
Bend in humility.

Vic. What means my lord ?

Lud. Act not this ignorance—your glorious fortune
Hath filled the common mouth—
Your image stands already in the mart
Of pictured ridicule.—Come, do not wear
The look of studied wonderment—you know
Howe'er I stand upon the highest place
In the King's favour, that you will full soon
Supplant the poor Ludovico.

Vic. I am no Œdipus.

Lud. You would have me speak in simpler phrase ;
Vicentio,
You are to be the favourite of the king.

Vic. The favourite of the king !

Lud. Certes, Vicentio.
In our Italian courts, the generous husband
Receives his monarch's recompensing smile,
That with alchymic power can turn the mass

Of dull, opprobrious shame, to one bright heap
Of honour and emolument.

I bid you joy, my lord—why, how is this?

Do you not yet conceive me? Know you not,

You are to wed the mistress of the King?

Colonna's sister—ay, I have said it, sir,—

Now do you understand me?

Vic. Villain, thou liest!

Lud. What? are you not to marry her?

Vic. Thou liest!

Though thou wert ten times what thou art already,

Not all the laurels heaped upon thy head

Should save thee from the lightnings of my wrath!

Lud. If it were my will,

The movement of my hand should beckon death

To thy presumption. But I have proved too oft

I bore a fearless heart, to think you dare

To call me coward—and I am too wise

To think I can revenge an injury

By giving you my life. But I compassionate,

Nay, I have learned to esteem thee for a wrath,

That speaks thy noble nature.

Fare thee well!

[*Crosses, L.*

Thy pulse is now too fevered for the cure

I honestly intended—yet, before

I part, here take this satisfying proof

Of what a woman's made of.

[*Gives him a letter*

Vic. It is her character!

Hast thou shed phosphor on the innocent page,

That it has turned to fire?

Lud. Thou hast thy fate.

Vic. 'Tis signed, "Evadne!"

Lud. Yes, it is—farewell!

Vic. For Heaven's sake, hear me,—Stay.—Oh, pardon
me

For the rash utterance of a frantic man—

Speak! in mercy speak!

Lud. I will

In mercy speak, indeed.—In mercy to

That fervid generosity of heart

That I behold within thee.

Vic. From whom is this?

Lud. From whom! look there!

Vic. Evadne!

Lud. 'Tis written to the King and to my hand,
For he is proud of it, as if it were
A banner of high victory, he bore it,
To evidence his valour.—It is grown
His cup-theme now, and your Evadne's name
Is lisped with all the insolence on his tongue
Of satiated triumph—he exclaims—
The poor Vicentio!

Vic. The poor Vicentio!

Lud. [*Aside.*] What! shall he murder him?—no, no—
Colonna!

The poor Vicentio!—and he oftentimes
Cries, that he pities you!

Vic. He pities me!

Lud. I own that sometime I was infidel
To all the bombast vaunting of the King,
But—

Vic. 'Tis Evadne!—I have gazed upon it,
In hope that with the glaring of mine eyes,
I might burn out the false and treacherous word—
But still 'tis there—no more—else will it turn
My brain to a red furnace.—Look you, my lord—
Thus as I rend the cursed evidence
Of that vile woman's falsehood—thus I cast
My love into the winds, and as I tread
Upon the poisoned fragments of the snake
That stings me into madness, thus, Ludovico,
Thus do I trample on her! [*Crosses L.*]

Lud. Have you ne'er heard,—
For 'twas so widely scattered in the voice
Of common rumour, that the very wind,
If it blew fair for Florence—

Vic. I have heard
Some whispers, which I long had flung away
With an incredulous hatred from my heart—
But now, this testimony has conjured
All other circumstances in one vast heap
Of damned certainty!—Farewell, my lord— [*Crosses R.*]

Lud. Hear me, Vicentio.
Vengeance is left you still—the deadliest, too,

That a false woman can be made to feel:
 Take her example—be not satisfied
 With casting her for ever from your heart,
 But to the place that she has forfeited,
 Exalt a lovelier than—but I perceive
 You are not in a mood to hear me now—
 Some other time, Vicentio—and, meanwhile,
 Despite your first tempestous suddenness,
 You will think that I but meant your honour well
 In this proceeding.

Vic. I believe I owe you
 That sort of desperate gratitude, my lord,
 The dying patient owes the barbarous knife,
 That delves in throes of mortal agony,
 And tears the rooted cancer from his heart! [*Exeunt, L.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in Colonna's Palace.*

Enter EVADNE, M. D., looking at a picture.

Eva. 'Tis strange he comes not! through the city's gates
 His panting courser passed before the sun
 Had climbed to his meridian, yet he comes not!—
 Ah! Vicentio,
 To know thee near me, yet behold thee not,
 Is sadder than to think thee far away;
 For I had rather that a thousand leagues
 Of mountain ocean should dis sever us,
 Than thine own heart, Vicentio.—Sure, Vicentio,
 If thou didst know with what a pining gaze
 I feed mine eyes upon thine image here,
 Thou wouldst not now leave thine Evadne's love
 To this same cold idolatry.

*Enter OLIVIA, unperceived, L. U. E., down on R., and touches
 Evadne on the shoulder.*

I will swear
 That smile's a false one, for it sweetly tells
 No tarrying indifference.—Olivia!

Olin. I have stolen unperceived upon your hours
 Of lonely meditation, and surprised
 Your soft soliloquies to that fair face.—
 Nay, do not blush—reserve that rosy dawn

For the soft pressure of Vicentio's lips.

Eva. You mock me, fair Olivia,—I confess.
That musing on my cold Vicentio's absence,
I quarrelled with the blameless ivory.

Oliv. He was compelled, as soon as he arrived,
To wait upon the great Ludovico ;
Meanwhile, your soft, expecting moments, flow
In tender meditation on the face,
You dare to gaze upon in ivory
With fonder aspect, than when you behold
Its bright original ; for then 'tis meet
Your pensive brows be bent upon the ground,
And sighs as soft as zephyrs on the wave,
Should gently heave your heart.—Is it not so ?
Nay, do not now rehearse your heart, I pray ;—
Reserve those downcast lockings for Vicentio ;
That's a fair picture—let me, if you dare
Entrust the treasure to another's hand,
Let me look on it.

[*Takes Vicentio's picture.*]

What a sweetness plays
On those half-opened lips !—He gazed on you,
When those bright eyes were painted.

Eva. You have got
A heart so free of care, than you can mock
Your pensive friend with such light merriment.
But hark ! I hear a step.

Oliv. Now fortune aid me
In her precipitation.

Eva. It is himself !—
Olivia, he is coming.—Well I know
My Lord Vicentio hastens to mine eyes !
The picture—pr'ythee, give it back to me—
I must constrain you to it.

Oliv. [*Who has substituted the picture of the King.*] It is
in vain

To struggle with you, then—with what a grasp
You rend it from my hand, as if it were
Vicentio that I had stolen away.

[*Gives her the King's picture, which Evadne places in
her bosom.*]

[*Aside.*] I triumph !—He is coming—I must leave you,
Nor interrupt the meeting of your hearts

By my officious presence !

[*Exit, L.*

Eva. It is himself !

Swiftly he passes through the colonnade !

Oh ! Vicentio,

Thy coming bears me joy as bright as e'er

Beat through the heart of woman, that was made

For suffering, and for transport !—Oh, Vicentio !

Enter VICENTIO, L.

Are you, then, come at last ?—do I once more

Behold my bosom's lord, whose tender sight

Is necessary for my happiness

As light for heaven !—My lord !—Vicentio !—

I blush to speak the transport in my heart,

But I am rapt to see you.

Vic. [Aside.] Dissembling woman !

Eva. How is this, my lord ?

You look altered.

Vic. But you do not look altered—would you did !

Let me peruse the face where loveliness

Stays, like the light, after the sun is set.

Sphered in the stillness of those heaven-blue eyes,

The soul sits beautiful ; “ the high white front,

“ Smooth as the brow of Pallas, seems a temple

“ Sacred to holy thinking !” and those lips

Wear the sweet smile of sleeping infancy

They are so innocent.—Oh ! Evadne,

Thou art not altered—would thou wert !

Eva. Vicentio,

This strangeness I scarce hoped for.—Say, Vicentio,

Has any ill befallen you ?—I perceive

That it's warm blood hath parted from your cheek :—

Ah me ! you are not well, Vicentio.

Vic. In sooth, I am not.—There is in my breast

A wound that mocks all cure—no salve, nor anodyne,

Nor medicinal herb, can e'er allay

The festering of that agonizing wound

You have driven into my heart !

Eva. I ?

Vic. Why, Evadne,

Why did you ever tell me that you loved me ?

Why was not I in mercy spurned away,

Scorned, like Ludovico? for unto him
You dealt in honour, and despised his love :
But me you soothed and flattered—sighed and blushed—
And smiled and wept, for you can weep ; (even now
Your tears flow by volition, and your eyes,
Convenient fountains, have begun to gush,)
To stab me with a falsehood yet unknown
In falsest woman's perfidy ! [*Turns from her.*

Eva. Vicentio,

Why am I thus accused ? What have I done ?

Vic. What !—are you grown already an adept
In cold dissimulation ? Have you stopped
All access from your heart into your face ?
Do you not blush ?

Eva. I do, indeed, for you !

Vic. The King !

Eva. The King ?

Vic. Come, come, confess at once, and wear it high
Upon your towering forehead—swell your port—
Away with this unseemly bashfulness,
That will be deemed a savageness at court—
Confront the talking of the busy world—
Tell them you are the mistress of the King,
Tell them you are Colonna's sister, too ;
But hark you, madam,—prithee, do not say
You are Vicentio's wife ! [*Taking Stage, L.*

Eva. Injurious man !

Vic. The very winds from the four parts of heaven
Blew it throughout the city—

Eva. And if angels

Cried, trumpet-tongued, that I was false to you,
You should not have believed it.—You forget,
Who dares to stain a woman's honesty.
Does her a wrong, as deadly as the brand
He fears upon himself.—Go, go, Vicentio—
You are not what I deemed you !—Mistress ?—fie !
Let me not behold

The man who has reviled me with a thought
Dishonouring as that one !—for shame ! for shame !
Oh ! Vicentio,

Do I deserve this of you ?

Vic. If I had wronged her !—

Eva. I will not descend
To vindicate myself—dare to suspect me!—
My lord, I am to guess that you came here,
To speak your soul's revolt, and to demand
Your plighted vows again,—If for this
You tarry here, I freely give you back
Your late repented faith—Farewell forever!

[*As she is going, R.*

Vic. Evadne!

Eva. Well, my lord?—

Vic. Evadne, stay!—

Eva. Vicentio!

[*With a look of reproaching remonstrance.*

Vic. Let me look in thy face—

Oh, 'tis impossible!—I was bemocked,
And cheated by that villain!—nothing false
Sure ever looked like thee; and yet wilt thou
But swear—

Eva. What should I swear?—

Vic. That you did not

Betray me to the King.

Eva. Never!—

Vic. Nor e'er

Didst write in love to him?

Eva. Oh, never, never!—I perceive, Vicentio,
Some villain hath abused thy credulous ear—
But no!—I will not now enquire it of thee—
When I am calmer—I must hence betimes,
To chase these blots of sorrow from my face,—
For if Colonna should behold me weep,
So tenderly he loves me, that I fear
His hot, tempestuous nature—Why, Vicentio,
Do you still wrong me with a wildered eye,
That sheds suspicion?

Vic. [*Aside.*] I now remember
Another circumstance, Ludovico
Did tell me as I came—I do not see
My picture on her bosom.

Eva. Well, Vicentio?

Vic. When I departed hence, about your neck
I hung my pictured likeness, which mine eyes,
Made keen by jealous vigilance, perchance

Desire upon your breast.

Era. And is that all?

And in such fond and petty circumstance,
Seek you suspicion's nourishment?—Vicentio,
I must disclose my weakness—here, Vicentio,
I have pillowed your dear image on a heart
You should not have distrusted.

[Draws the King's Picture from her bosom.

Here it is—

And now, my lord, suspect me if you can.

Vic. *[Starting.]* A horrid phantom, more accursed than
e'er

Yet crossed the sleep of frenzy, stares upon me—
Speak—speak at once—
Or—let it blast thee too.

Era. Sure some dark spell,
Some fearful witchery—I am struck to ashes,—
Amazement, like the lightning—give it me,
And I will fix it in my very eyes,
Clasp it against my sight—'Tis not Vicentio!—

Vic. It is the King!

Era. Oh! do not yield it faith,—
Give not thy senses credence? Oh, Vicentio,
I am confounded, maddened, lost, Vicentio!
Some demon paints it on the coloured air—
'Tis not reality that stares upon me!—
Oh! hide it from my sight!—

Vic. Chance has betrayed thee,
And saves my periled honour—Here, thou all fraud,
Thou mass of painted perjury,—thou woman!—
And now I have done with thee, and pray to heaven
I ne'er may see thee more. *[Going, L.]* But, hold!—I must
Recall that wish again—The time will come
When I would look on thee—then, Evadne, then,
When the world's scorn is on thee, let me see
Thee, old in youth, and bending 'neath the load
Of sorrow, not of time—then let me see thee,
And mayest thou, as I pass, lift up thy head
But once from the sad earth, and then, Evadne,
Look down again forever!

[Exit, R.]

Enter COLONNA, M. D., in time to see Vicentio go off.—Erad.

ne, at first not perceiving that he is gone, and recovering from her stupefaction.

Eva. I will swear—

Give it back to me—Oh! I am innocent!

[Rushes up to Colonna, who advances, &c., mistaking him for a moment for Vicentio.]

By heaven, I am innocent!

Col. Who dares to doubt it,—

Who knows thee of that noble family,

That cowardice in man, or wantonness

In woman, ever tarnished?

Eva. [*Aside.*] He is gone!—

Col. But how is this, Evadne? In your face
I read a wildered air has ta'en the place
Of that placidity, that used to shine
Forever on thy holy countenance.

Eva. Now, as I value my Vicentio's life—

Col. One of love's summer clouds, I doubt me, sister,
Hath floated o'er you, though 'twere better far
That it had left no rain drops.—What has happened?

Eva. There's nothing has befallen, only—

Col. What, only?

Eva. I pray you, pardon me—I must begone!

Col. Evadne, stay! let me behold you well—
Why do you stand at distance? nearer still,—
Evadne!—

Eva. Well?

Col. Vicentio—

Eva. [*Assuming an affected lightness of manner.*]

Why, Colonna—

Think you that I'm without my sex's arts,
And did not practise all the torturings
That make a woman's triumph?

Col. 'Twas not well.

I hoped thee raised above all artifice
That makes thy sex but infancy matured.
I was at first inclined to follow him,
And ask what this might mean?

Eva. Then he had told

That I had played the tyrant.—Had you seen
How like my peevish lap-dog he appeared,

Just beaten with a fan.—Ha! ha! Colonna,
 You will find us all alike.—Ha! ha! my heart
 Will break. [Bursts into tears.

Col. Farewell!

Eva. What would you do?

Col. Let all the world
 Hold me a slave, and hoard upon my head
 Its gathered infamy—be all who bear
 Colonna's name scorn-blighted—may disgrace
 Gnaw off all honour from my family,
 If I permit an injury to thee
 To 'scape Colonna's vengeance!—

Eva. Hold, my brother!
 I will not leave thy sight!

Col. Then follow me;
 And if thou art abandoned, after all
 Vicentio's plighted faith, thou shalt behold—
 By heavens, an emperor should not do thee wrong,
 Or, if he did, though I'd a thousand lives,
 I had given them all to avenge thee.—I'll inquire
 Into this business; and if I find
 Thou hast lost a lover, I will give him proof,
 I've my right arm, and thou thy brother still. [Exeunt, R.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Naples.—The Front of Olivia's House, R. D. F.*

Enter LUDOVICO and VICENTIO, L.

Lud. There is Olivia's house!

Vic. Thou hast resolved me.

I thank thee for thy counsel, and at once [Crosses, R.]
 Speed to its dread performance. [Raps, R. D. F.]

Enter a SERVANT, R. D. F.

'Bides the lady Olivia in her home?

Serv. She does, my lord. [Exit, R. D. F.]

Vic. Farewell, Ludovico! thou see'st, my friend,
For such I ever hold thee, that I pass
The stream of destiny. Thou sayest, Ludovico,
'Tis necessary for my fame.

Lud. No less —

By marrying Olivia, you disperse
The noises that abroad did sully you,
Of having given consent to play the cloak
To the King's dalliance.

Vic. Oh, speak of it
No more, Ludovico! Farewell, my friend,
I will obey your counsels.— [*Exit into Olivia's house.*]

Lud. Fare you well,
My passionate, obsequious instrument,
Whom now I scorn so much, I scarcely let thee
Reach to the dignity of being hated.

Enter the King, L., disguised.

King. My faithful servant, my Ludovico!

Lud. My prince! I did not hope to meet you **here!**
What, in this masqued attire, has made you veil
The dazzling brightness of your royalty,
And led you from your palace?

King. I have ta'en
Concealment's wonted habit, to escape
The hundred eyes of curiosity,
And, wearied with the rotatory course
Of dull unchanging pleasure, sought for thee.
Shall she be mine, Ludovico?

Lud. My liege,
I marvel not at the impatient throb
Of restless expectation in your heart.
And know, my liege, that not in vain I toil,
To waft you to her bosom, for Vicentio
Renounces her forever! and but moved
By my wise counsels, hath already prayed
The fair Olivia's hand.

King. How, my Ludovico,
Didst thou accomplish it?

Lud. I turned to use
The passion of Olivia; while Evadne traced
A letter to Vicentio, suddenly

The news of his expected coming reached
Her panting breast, and in the rush of joy,
Unfinished on her table did she leave
The page of amorous wishes, which the care
Of unperceived Olivia haply seized,
And bore unto my hand.—Vicentio's name
Was drowned in hurried vocatives of love,
As thus—"My lord—my life—my soul,"—the which
I made advantage of, and did persuade him
'Twas written to your highness,—and with lights
Caught from the very torch of truest love,
I fired the furies' brands—

King. My faithful friend!

Lud. Then with your picture did Olivia work
Suspicion into frenzy—when he came
From your Evadne's house, I threw myself,
As if by fortune, in his path:—I urged
His heated passions to my purposes,
And bade him ask Olivia's hand, to prove
How much he scorned her falsehood.—Even now
He makes his suit, for there Olivia dwells,
And as you came, he entered.

King. But wherein
Will this promote the crowning of my love?

Lud. I said Colonna's self should be the first
To lead you to her arms—

King. Thou didst, Ludovico,
The which performed, I'll give thee half my realm.

[*Crosses, R.*

Lud. [*Aside.*] You shall give all!

King. Accomplish this, my friend,
Thou art my great Apollo!

Lud. No, my liege,
You shall be Jove,
And taste more joys than the Olympian did,
In golden showers in Danae's yielding heart.

King. Ludovico, thou art as dear to me
As the rich circle of my royalty.
Farewell, Ludovico; I shall expect
Some speedy tidings from thee—fare thee well!
To-night, Ludovico.

[*Exit, R.*

Lud. To-night, you perish!

Colonna's dagger shall let out your blood,
 And lance your wanton and high-swelling veins.—
 That I should stoop to such an infamy!
 Evadne here!

Enter EVADNE, L.

Not for the King, but for myself I mean,
 A feast fit for the gods!

Eva. [*With some agitation.*] My Lord Ludovico—

Lud. The beautiful Evadne!

What would the brightest maid of Italy
 Of her poor servant?

Eva. Sir, may I entreat
 Your knowledge where the Count Vicentio
 'Bides at this present instant? I have been informed
 He 'compained you here.

Lud. It grieves me sore
 He hath done you so much wrong.

Eva. What may you mean?

Lud. 'Tis talked of in the whispering gallery,
 Where envy holds her court:
 Who would have thought Vicentio's heart was like
 A plaything stuck with Cupid's lightest plumes,
 Thus to be tossed from one heart to another?
 Or rather, who had thought that you were made
 For such abandonment?

Eva. I scarce can guess—

Lud. I did not mean to touch so nice a wound.
 If you desire to learn where now he bides,
 I can inform you.

Eva. Where, Ludovico?

Lud. Yonder, Evadne, in Olivia's house.

Eva. Olivia's house? what would he there?

Lud. You know

Vicentio and Olivia are to-day—

Eva. My lord?

Lud. Are to be married—

Eva. Married, my lord?

Vicentio and Olivia to be married!

Lud. I am sorry that it moves you thus—Evadne;
 "Had I been used as that ingrate, be sure
 "I ne'er had proved like him"—I would not thus

Have flung thee like a poppy from my heart.
A drowsy, sleep-provoking flower :—Evadne,
I had not thus deserted you ! [Exit, R.

Eva. Vicentio,
Olivia and Vicentio to be married ?
I heard it—yes—I am sure I did—Vicentio !
Olivia to be married !—and Evadne,
Whose heart was made of adoration—
Vicentio in her house ? there—underneath
That woman's roof—behind the door that looks
To shut me out from hope.—I will myself—
[Advancing, then checking herself.]
I do not dare to do it—but he could not.—
He could not use me thus—he could not—Ha !

Enter VICENTIO, from Olivia's House, R. D. F.

Vic. Evadne here ?

Eva. Would I had been born blind,
Not to behold the fatal evidence
Of my abandonment !—Am I condemned
Even by the ocular proof, to be made sure
That I'm a wretch forever !

Vic. [Advances, R.] Does she come
To bate me with reproaches ? or does she dare
To think that she can angle me again
To the vile pool wherein she meant to catch me ?
I'll pass her with the bitterness of scorn,
Nor seem to know her present to my sight.

[Crosses, L., and passes her.]
Now I'm at least revenged. [Going, L.]

Eva. My lord, I pray you—
My lord, I dare entreat—Vicentio—

Vic. Who calls upon Vicentio ? Was it you ?
What would you with him, for I bear the name.

Eva. Sir, I—

Vic. Go on.—[Aside.] I'll taunt her to the quick

Eva. My lord, I—

Vic. I pray you, speak—I cannot guess,
By such wild broken phrase, what you would have
Of one who knows you not.

Eva. Not know me ?

Vic. No—

Let me look in your face—there is indeed
Some faint resemblance to a countenance
Once much familiar to Vicentio's eyes,
But 'tis a shadowy one ;—she that I speak of
Was full of virtues, as the milky way
Upon a frozen night is thick with stars.
She was as pure as an untasted fountain,
Fresh as an April blossom, kind as love,
And good as infants giving charity !—
Such was Evadne :—fare you well ?

Eva. My lord,

Is't true what I have heard ?—

Vic. What have you heard ?

Eva. Speak—are you to be married—let me hear it—
Thank heav'n, I've strength to hear it.

Vic. I scarce guess
What interest you find in one that deems
Himself a stranger to you.

Eva. Sir—

Vic. But if

You are indeed solicitous to learn
Aught that imports me, learn that I to-day
Have asked the fair Olivia's hand, in place of one—

Eva. You have bedewed with tears, and that henceforth
Will fear no lack of tears, though they may fall
From other eyes than yours.—So, then, Vicentio,
Fame did not wrong you,—You are to be married ?

Vic. To one within whose heart as pure a fire
As in the shrine of Vesta, long has burned.
Not the coarse flame of a corrupted heart,
To every worship dedicate alike,
A false perfidious seeming.—

Eva. I implore you

To spare your accusations.—I am come—

Vic. Doubtless to vindicate yourself.

Eva. Oh, no !—

An angel now would vainly plead my cause
Within Vicentio's heart—therefore, my lord,
I have no intent to interrupt the rite
That makes that lady yours ; but I am come
Thus breathless as you see me—would to heav'n
I could be tearless, too !—“ you will think, perhaps,

"That 'gainst the trembling fearfulness I sin,
"That best becomes a woman, and that most
"Becomes a sad abandoned one."

Vic. Evadne—

Evadne, you deceive yourself.

Eva. "I knew

"I should encounter this—

"But I will endure it"—nay, more, my lord,
Hear all the vengeance I intend.—

Vic. Go on.—

Eva. May you be happy with that happier maid,
That never could have loved you more than I do,
But may deserve you better!—May your days,
Like a long stormless summer, glide away,
And peace and trust be with you!—"May you be
"The after-patterns of felicity,
"That lovers, when they wed, may only wish
"To be as blest as you were; loveliness
"Dwell round about you, like an atmosphere.
"Of our soft southern air, where every flower
"In Hymen's yellow wreath may bloom and blow!
"Let nature, with the strong domestic bond
"Of parent tenderness, unite your hearts
"In holier harmony; and when you see
"What you both love, more ardently adore!"
And when at last you close your gentle lives,
Blameless as they were blessed, may you fall
Into the grave as softly as the leaves
Of two sweet roses on an autumn eve,
Beneath the soft sighs of the western wind,
Drop to the earth together!—for myself—
I will but pray—[*Sobbing.*]—I will but pray, my lord

Vic. [*Aside.*] I must begone, else she may soon regain
A mastery o'er my nature.

Eva. Oh, Vicentio,

I see that I am doomed a trouble to you.
I shall not long be so.

There's but one trouble I shall ever give
To any one again. I will but pray
The maker of the lonely beds of peace
To open one of his deep, hollow ones,
Where misery goes to sleep, and let me in;—

If ever you chance to pass beside my grave,
I am sure you'll not refuse a little sigh.
And if my friend, (I still will call her so,)
My friend, Olivia, chide you, pr'ythee tell her
Not to be jealous of me in my grave.

Vic. The picture! In your bosom—near your heart—
There, on the very swellings of your breast,
The very shrine of chastity, you raised
A foul and curséd idol!

Eva. You did not give me time—no— not a moment,
To think what villainy was wrought to make me
So hateful to your eyes.—It is too late;
You are Olivia's, I have no claim to you—
You have renounced me—

Vic. Come, confess—confess—

Eva. What, then, should I confess?—that you, that
heaven,
That all the world seems to conspire against me,
And that I am accursed?—But let me hold—
I waste me in the selfishness of woe,
While life, perchance, is periled.—Oh, Vicentio.
Prithee, avoid Colonna's sight!

Vic. Evadne?—

You do not think to fright me with his name?

Eva. Vicentio, do not take away from me
All that I've left to love in all the world!
Avoid Colonna's sight to-day.—Vicentio,
Only to-day avoid him,—I will find
Some way to reconcile him to my fate—
I'll lay the blame upon my hapless head!—
Only to-day, Vicentio.

Enter COLONNA, R. S. E.

Col. (R.) Ha! my sister!
Where is thy dignity? Where is the pride
Meet for Colonna's sister?—hence!—My lord--

Vic. (L.) What would you, sir?

Col. Your life:—you are briefly answered.
Look here, sir.—To this lady you preferred
Your despicable love! Long did you woo,
And when at last, by constant adoration,
Her sigh revealed that you were heard, you gained

Her brother's cold assent.—Well, then—no more—
For I've no patience to repeat by cause
The wrong that thou hast done her. It has reached
Colonna's ear, that you have abandoned her—
It rings through Naples, my good lord—now, mark me—
I am her brother—

Vic. Well—

Eva. (c.) Forbear! forbear!
I have no injury you should resent
In such a fearful fashion.—I—my brother—
I am sure I never uttered a complaint
Heaved with one sigh, nor shed a single tear.
Look at me, good Colonna!—now, Colonna,
Can you discern a sorrow in my face?
I do not weep—I do not—look upon me—
Why, I can smile, Colonna. [*Bursts into tears.*]
Oh! my brother!—

Col. You weep, Evadne! but I'll mix your tears
With a false villain's blood.—If you have left
A sense of aught that's noble in you still—

Vic. My lord, you do mistake, if you have hope
Vicentio's name was e'er designed to be
The cloak of such vile purpose—

Col. How? explain—
I understand you not.

Eva. Forbear, Colonna;
Before your face, and in the face of heaven,
I freely do resign him; I forgive him,
And may heaven follow my example, too!

Col. But I will not, Evadne.—I shall deal
In briefest phrase with you.—Is't true, my lord,
You have abandoned her?

Vic. Is't true, my lord,
That to the king—

Col. The king?

Vic. And could you think
That I am to be made an instrument
For such a foul advancement? do you think
That I would turn my name into a cloak?—
Eva. Colonna, my dear brother! Oh, Vicentio!
My love, my life, my—pardon me, my lord,
I had forgot—I have no right to use

Words that were once familiar to my lips :
But, for Heaven's sake, I do implore you here—

Col. Sir, you said something, if I heard aright,
Touching the king ;—explain yourself.

Vic. I will !

I will not wed his mistress !

Eva. [*With reproach.*] Oh, Vicentio !

Whom mean you, sir ?

Vic. Look there !

Col. Evadne ! ha ?

Vic. Evadne !

Col. [*Crosses, c., and strikes him with his glove.*] Here's
my answer ! follow me !

Beyond the city's gates, I shall expect you. [*Exit, L.*

Eva. [*Clinging to Vicentio, who has his sword drawn,
and kneeling to him.*] You shall not stir !

Vic. If from his heart I poured

A sea of blood, it would not now content me.

Insolent villain ! dost thou stay me back ?

Away ! unloose me !

Eva. Olivia, hear me—listen to my cry—

It is thy husband's life that now I plead for ;

Save, oh, save him !

Vic. Then must I fling thee from me.

That swift as lightning on the whirlwind's wings,

I rush to my revenge !

Eva. Oh ! my poor heart !

Choak not, thou struggling spirit, in my breast !

Hear me, Olivia !—Olivia, hear me !

*Vicentio drags Evadne off, R., she clinging round his
neck*

END OF ACT III.

A C T I V .

SCENE I.—*The Bay, and View of Naples.*

Enter COLONNA and VICENTIO, L., with their swords drawn, passing across to R.

Col. Yonder, my lord, beside the cypress grove,
Fast by the churchyard—there's a place, methinks,
Where we may 'scape the eye of observation.

Vic. I follow, sir—the neighbourhood of the grave
Will suit our purpose well, for you or I
Must take its measure ere the sun be set. [*Exeunt, R.*

Enter LUDOVICO, L. S. E., as they go off.

Lud. Ha! there they go!—the furies, with their whips
Of hissing serpents, lash you to your fate!
My dull and passionate fools—you fall at last
Into the pit I have dug for you—the grave.
You grasp the murdering hilt, while I, in thought,
Already clench the glorious staff of empire.
I hate you both!—One of you has denounced me—
The other, robbed me of a woman's love.
They have already entered in the grove
Of funeral cypress.—Now they are lost
Amid the crowded trunks—and yet a moment,
And they will be about it!—Now, Vicentio,
Thy fate is sealed.—Colonna's arm—
Ha! who comes here?
Evadne!—yes—my eyes deceive me not—
'Twas happiest chance that led me to the field—
She must be interrupted—let me think—
I have it.

Enter EVADNE, L.

Eva. For heaven's sake, whoe'er you are,
Tell me which way they passed—doth not this lead
To the eastern gate of the city?—Ha! Ludovico!
My lord, my lord—my brother, and Vicentio—

Lud. I know it all—and I shall thank the fate
That made Ludovico the messenger

Of such blest tidings to Evadne's ear—
Your brother and Vicentio.

Eva. Speak, my lord—
For heaven's sake, speak!

Lud. They are secure—thank heaven,
Their purpose is prevented.—

Eva. Secure!
My brother and Vicentio are secure!

Lud. By providential circumstance, before
Their purpose was accomplished, both were seized,
And all their furious passions are as hushed
As the still waters of yon peaceful bay.

Eva. Ludovico, I cannot speak how much
Thou hast bound me to thee, by the holy sounds
Thou hast breathed upon mine ear!—But, tell me, sir,
Where, how, and when was this?—What blessed hand—
“Speak, my lord!”

Lud. 'Twas I!

Eva. 'Twas you, Ludovico?

Lud. The same!

Hearing Olivia's marriage with Vicentio,
I saw the dreadful issue, and I flew
With the strong arm of power to intercept them.

Eva. 'Twas you, Ludovico—what shall I say?
I know not what to tell you.—But, heav'n bless you!
A thousand times, heaven bless you!—On my knees,
And at your feet, I thank you. [Kneels.]

Lud. Beautiful Evadne!
Loveliest beneath the skies, where everything
Grows lovely as themselves! Nay, do not bend
Your eyes, and hide beneath these fleecy clouds,
Stars beaming as the evening one, nor turn
That cheek away, that, like a cold rose, seems
Besprankt with snow!—nor strive to win from me
Those hands, which he who formed the lily, formed
With imitative whiteness—I will presume,—
For your dear sight hath made a madman of me,
To press my rapture here—

[About to take her hand, which she carelessly withdraws.]

Eva. My lord, I own
That you surprise me, and were I not bound
By strenuous obligation, I should say,

Perchance you did offend me—But I will not !
Accept my gradtiude, and be you sure
These thanks are from a warm and honest heart.
Farewell ! [*Crosses, R.*

Lud. You fly me, then !

Eva. I do not fly your presence, but I go
To seek my brother's bosom—

Lud. And Vicentio's !

Eva. You would be merry, sir.

Lud. I have not cause—

Nor shall you, madam. You would fly me thus,
To rush at once into my rival's arms—
Nay, do not start—he well deserves the name—
I know him by no other.

Eva. Sir, I hope

You will not revive a subject that has long
Between us been forgotten.

Lud. What ! forgotten ?

I did not think to hear it—said you forgotten ?
Nay, do not think you leave me—in return
For such small service as I have done to-day,
I beg your audience—tell me what's forgotten ?
I would hear it from your lips.

Eva. I did not mean—

Forgive, and let me go.

[*Crosses, R.*

Lud. What ? what forgotten ?

Your heartlessness to all the maddening power
Of the tumultuous passions in my heart !—
What ! what forgotten ? all the injuries
You have cast upon my head—the stings of fire
You have driven into my soul—my agonies,
My tears, my supplications, and the groans
Of my indignant spirit ! I can hold
My curbed soul no more—it rushes out !
What ? what forgotten ?—me—Ludovico ?

Eva. I pray you, my good lord, for heaven's sake, near
me.

Lud. What ! to behold him, like a pilferer,
With his smooth face of meanless infancy,
And his soft moulded body, steal away
That feathered thing, thy heart.

Eva. Ludovico,

What may this sudden fury mean ?—you do
But act these horrid passions to affright me !
For you to-day preserved him, did you not ?
Did you not say you saved Vicentio ?

Lud. I will permit you shortly to embrace him—
I will not long detain you from his arms—
But you will find him grown as cold a lover
As moonlight statues—his fond arms will hang
In loosened idleness about your form,—
And from those lips, where you were wont to t'imbibe
The fiery respiration of the heart,
You will touch the coldness of the unsunned snow,
Without it's purity.

Eva. I now perceive
What you would hint, my lord :—doubtless you deem
Vicentio hath preferred Olivia's love ?

Lud. If you can wake his heart to love again,
I'll hold you for a sorceress—no, Evadne,
You ne'er shall be Vicentio's—but mine !

Eva. Thine !

Lud. Mine !—I have said it, and before to-night
I'll verify the prophecy.

Eva. I know not .
What lies within the dark and horrid cave
Of your imagination ; but be sure
I had rather clasp Vicentio dead—I see
That you recoil with passion.

Lud. By the fires—
Down, down, my burning heart !—So you would rather
Within Vicentio's cold and mouldering shroud,
Warm into love, than on this beating heart ?
But be it so—you will have occasion soon
To try the experiment—and then, Evadne,
You will more aptly judge.

Eva. Ha ! a strong glare,
Like the last flash from sinking ships, has poured
A horrid radiance on me—Ha ! Ludovico—
Let it be frenzy that before my face
Spreads out that sheet of blood—

Lud. Well, my Evadne ?

Eva. Demon, hast thou mocked me ?

Lud. Didst thou not scorn—didst thou not madden me ?

Didst thou not—Ha! [Seeing Colonna, crosses, R.

By heavens, it is himself!—

All is accomplished—and upon my front

Methinks I clasp the round of royalty.

Already do I clasp thee in mine arms!

Evadne!—There—look there—Colonna comes,

[Crosses, L.

And on that weapon, flaming from afar,

He bears the vengeance of Ludovico.

[Exit, L.

Enter COLONNA, R., with his sword bloody.

Col. Evadne here!

Eva. My brother!

Col. Call me so—

For I have proved myself to be thy brother.

Look here!

Eva. There's blood upon it!

Col. And there should be.

Eva. Thou hast—

Col. I have revenged thee!

Eva. Thou hast slain—

Villain, thou hast slain Vicentio?

Col. I have revenged thee—

For any wrong done to my single self,

I should, perhaps, repent me of the deed;

But, for a wrong to thee—Why dost thou look

Up to the heavens with such a 'wildered gaze?

Eva. To curse thee, and myself, and all the world!

Villain, thou hast slain Vicentio!—thou hast slain him

Who was as dear unto my frantic heart,

As thou art horrible!—and 'tis to me

Thou comest to tell me, too—thou comest to bear

That weapon weltering with my lover's blood,

And stab these blasted eye-balls—Hide thee, villain!

Hide thee within the centre of the earth!

Thou art all made of blood—and to the sun

Art grown detestable—[Crosses, R.] Vicentio!

My lord! my bosom's throb! my pulse of life!

My soul! my joy—my love!—my all the world!

Vicentio! Vicentio!

[Crosses, L.

Col. Thy passionate grief

Doth touch me more than it beseems mine honour.

Eva. Strike that infernal weapon through my heart!
 Colonna, kill me!
 Kill me, my brother!

Col. Prithee, my Evadne,
 Let me conduct thy grief to secrecy—
 I must from hence prepare my speedy flight,
 For now my head is forfeit to the law!

Enter SPALATRO, with OFFICER and eight GUARDS, &c

Spal. Behold him here. Sir, I am sorry for
 The duty which mine office hath prescribed!
 You are my prisoner.

Col. Sir, there is need
 Of little words to excuse you—I was talking
 Of speeding me from Naples, as you came,
 But I scarce grieve you interrupt my flight,—
 Here is my sword.

Spal. You are doomed to death!

Eva. To death!

Spal. The king himself,
 Hearing your combat with Vicentio,
 Hath sworn, that who survived, shall by the axe—

Col. You speak before a woman—I was well
 Acquainted with my fate before you spoke it.

Eva. Death! must you die, Colonna? must you die?
 Oh! no—no—no! not die, sir,—say not die—

[*Crosses, &c.*

Col. Retire, my sister—sir, I follow you—

Eva. Oh, not die, Colonna! no, Colonna,
 They shall not take thee from me!

Col. My sweet sister!

I pray you, gentlemen, one moment more—
 This lady is my sister, and indeed
 Is now my only kin in all the world,
 And I must die for her sake—my sweet sister!

Eva. No, no, not die, my brother—Oh! not die!

Col. Evadne! sweet Evadne! Let me hear

[*Evadne becomes gradually insensible*

Thy voice before I go—I prithee, speak—
 That even in death I may remember me
 Of its sweet sounds, Evadne—She has fainted!
 Sir, I have a prayer to you.

Spal. It shall be granted.

Col. My palace is hard by—let some of these
Good guardians of the law attend me thither.

Evadne, for thy sake, I am almost loth
To leave a world, the which, when I am gone,
Thou wilt find, I fear, a solitary one!

[*Exit, bearing Evadne, and followed by Spalatro and
Guards, R.*]

SCENE II.—*A Prison.*

Enter LUDOVICO. R., meeting SPALATRO, L.

Lud. Where is Colonna?—Not yet arrived?

Spal. Guarded, he bore
His sister to his palace, from the which
He will be soon led here.—

Lud. Spalatro, as I passed, a rumor came,
Colonna's sword had but half done the work,
And that Vicentio was not stabbed to death—
If he still lives—but till I am sure of it,
No need to speak my resolution,—
Thou art his friend—

Spal. Such I'm indeed accounted,
But, save yourself, none doth deserve the name.

Lud. Then, hie thee hence, Spalatro, to inform me
If yet Vicentio breathes—[*Spalatro crosses, R.*—and after-
wards,

I'll make some trial of thy love to me.

[*Exit Spalatro, R. D.*]

Enter COLONNA, OFFICER, and eight GUARDS, L.

Col. Conduct me to my dungeon!—I have parted
From all that bound my bosom to the world—
Ludovico!

Lud. The same.

Col. Come you, my lord,
To swill with drunken thirst, the poor revenge
That makes a little mind's ignoble joy?

Lud. Guards! I discharge Colonna from your care;
He is no more your prisoner—Hence!

[*Exeunt Officer and Guards, L.*]

My lord,

Such is the vengeance of Ludovico!

Col. What is a man, doomed to the stroke of death,
To understand by this?

Lud. That I am his friend,
Who called me traitor!

Col. Such I call you still.

Lud. Well, then, I am a traitor.

Col. There is here

A kind of marvellous honesty, my lord.

Lud. In you, 'twas nobleness to bear the charge,

"And yet 'twas glory to deserve it, too.

"Your father was the tutor of the king,

"And loyalty is your inheritance—

"I am not blind to such exalted virtue,"

And I resolved to win Colonna's heart,

As hearts like his are won!—Unto the king,

Soon as Vicentio's fate had reached mine ear,

I hastened and implored your life.

Col. My life!—

Well, sir, my life?

[*With indifference.*

Lud. Upon my knees I fell,
Nor can I speak the joy that in my heart
Leaped, when I heard him say, that thou shouldst live.

Col. I am loth to owe you gratitude, my lord,
But, for my sister's sake, whom I would not
Leave unprotected on the earth, I thank you!

Lud. You have no cause to thank me; for, Colonna,
He did pronounce your death, e'en, as he said,
He gave you life.

Col. I understand you not.

Lud. Your honour's death, Colonna, which I hold
The fountain of vitality.

Col. Go on!

I scarce did hear what did concern my life,
But aught that touches honour—

Lud. Oh! Colonna,
I almost dread to tell thee.

Col. Prithee, speak!
You put me on the rack!

Lud. Wilt thou promise me,—
I will not ask thee to be calm, Colonna,—
Wilt promise me, that thou wilt not be mad?

Col. Whate'er it be, I will contain myself.
You said 'twas something that concerned mine honour,
The honour of mine house—he did not dare
To say my blood should by a foul attaint
Be in my veins corrupted; from their height
The mouldering banners of my family
Flung to the earth; the 'scutcheons of my fame
Trod by dishonour's foot, and my great race
Struck from the list of nobles?

Lud. No, Colonna,
Struck from the list of men!—he dared to ask
As a condition for thy life, (my tongue
Doth falter as I speak it, and my heart
Can scarcely heave,) by heavens, he dared to ask
That, to his foul and impious clasp, thou shouldst
Yield up thy sister.

Col. Ha!

Lud. The king doth set a price
Upon thy life, and 'tis thy sister's honour.

Col. My sister!

Lud. Ay, thy sister!

Col. What!—my sister!

Lud. Yes!—your sister, sir,—Evadne!

Col. Evadne! Thou hast plunged into mine ear
A sword of fire, and draw'st it to and fro
Athwart my brain—my sister!

Lud. Hold, Colonna!

Col. By yon heaven,
Though he were born with immortality,
I will find some way to kill him!
My sister!

Lud. Do not waste in idle wrath—

Col. My fathers! do you hear it in the tomb?
Do not your mouldering remnants of the earth
Feel horrid animation in the grave,
And strive to burst the ponderous sepulchre,
And throw it off!—My sister! oh! yon heavens!
Was this reserved for me? for me!—the son
Of that great man that tutored him in arms,
And loved him as myself!—I know you wonder
That tears are dropping from my flaming eyelids;
But 'tis the streaming of a burning heart,

And these are drops of fire.—My sister!

Lud. Now—

Do you now call me traitor? Do you think
'Twas such a crime, from off my country's heart
To fling this incubus of royalty?—

Am I a traitor? is't a sin, my lord,
To think a dagger were of use in Naples?

Col. Thou shalt not touch a solitary hair
Upon the villain's head!—his life is mine;
His heart is grown my property—Ludovico,
None kills him but myself!—I will, this moment,
Amid the assembled court, in face of day,
Rush on the monster, and, without a sword,
'Tear him to pieces!

[*Going, l.*

Lud. Nay, Colonna,
Within his court he might perchance escape you—
But, if you do incline to do a deed
Antiquity would envy,—with the means
He hath furnished you himself!—He means, Colonna,
In your own house that you should hold to-night
A glorious revelry, to celebrate
Your sovereign's sacred presence; and so soon
As all the guests are parted, you yourself
Should lead your sister to him—

Col. That I should
Convert the palace of mine ancestors
Into a place of brothelry—myself!—
Tell me no more, I prithee, if thou wouldst
I should be fit for death!—

Lud. In honour be
A Roman, an Italian in revenge.
“Waste not, in idle or tempestuous sound,
“Thy great resolve. The king intends to bear
“The honour of his presence to your house.”—
Nay, hold!—I'll tell him you consent—he straight
Will fall into the snare, and then, Colonna,
Make offering of his blood to thy revenge!

Col. I thank thee for thy warning—'tis well thought
on—

I'll make my vengeance certain, and commend
Thy wisdom in the counselling.

Lud. Then, hic thee hence!

And make meet preparation for the banquet.
I'll straight return, and tell him you're all joy
In the honour of his coming.

Col. The rigorous muscles of my clenched hand
Already feel impatience for the blow
That strikes the crownéd monster to the heart.

[*Exeunt, Colonna, L., Ludovico, R.*]

END OF ACT IV

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A vast Hall in Colonna's Palace, filled with Statues.—The Moon streams in through the Gothic windows, and appears to fall upon the Statues. A Chamber-door at back.*

Enter LUDOVICO and the KING, R.

Lud. This is the way, my liege. Colonna bade me
Conduct you to your chamber, while he went
To seek the fair Evadne, and conduct
Her soft reluctance to your highness' arms.

King. Ludovico, thou hast proved thyself to-day
The genius of my happier destiny ;
Thee must I thank, for 'twas thy rarer wit
Did guide me on to heaven.

Lud. [*Aside.*] I'll send you there.

King. When first I heard Vicentio fell beneath
The hot Colonna's sword, I do confess,
It smote me sore ; but now 'tis told abroad,
That he hath passed all peril.

Lud. I am glad
His death doth not conduct you to your joys.
Vicentio bears a slight, unharming wound,
That sheds his blood, but perils not his life :
But let him pass—let not a thought of him
Flit round the couch of love.

King. Good night, my friend,
And prithee, bid Colonna swiftly lead her
To the expecting transports of my heart.

Lud. I will bid him speed her coyness.

King. Hie thee, Ludovico,
For every moment seems an age.

[*Exit into chamber, R. U. E.*

Lud. An age!

For you, nor minute, hour, nor day, nor year,
Nor age, shall shortly be.

"'Tis now the dead of night—That sounds to me

"Like an apt word,—for nature doth to me

"Show like a giant corse.—This mighty world,

"Its wide and highly-vaulted sepulchre,

"And yonder moon a tomb-lamp! when the king

"Lies dead to boot, all things will then appear

"In a more full proportion."—Ha! he comes!

My dull and unconscious instrument!—Colonna!

Enter COLONNA, with a dagger, L. U. E.

Welcome, my friend, for such I dare to call you.—

The king's already to his bed retired,

Where death will be his paramour.

Col. I have heard

Vicentio was not wounded unto death—

Would this were sooner known!

Lud. Why, my good lord?

Col. Because the king would not have offered me

Such an indignity, nor should I now

Tread into murder.

Lud. Murder!—I had hoped

You would not, on the threshold of the deed,

Stay tottering thus—One would deem

It was a deed of sin, and not of honour,

That you had undertaken.

Col. By you heaven,

I cannot stab him like a slave that's hired

To be a blood-shedder! I cannot clench

This hand, accustomed to a soldier's sword,

Around this treacherous hilt, and with the other

Squeeze the choked spirit from the gasping throat—

Then kneel upon his bosom, and press out

The last faint sigh of life! Down, damnéd steel!

Fit instrument for cowards—[*Throws down the dagger near*

R.] I will play

A warrior's part, and arm him for the fight!—
Give me thy sword, that I may put defence
Into the tyrant's hand, and nobly kill him.

Come forth!

[*Going to R. U. E.*]

Lud. Hold, madman, hold!—what wouldst thou do?

Col. Bravely encounter him—not take his life
Like a mercenary stabber.

Lud. Hast thou thought
That he may be the victor, too?

Col. My death
Will not be thought inglorious.

Lud. There's some praise
In falling by the hand of royalty;
But when you are laid within your sepulchre,
And rot most honourably, then, I fear me,
A lesser shame will not befall your house
For all the graven marbles on your tomb!
Your sister—

Col. Ha!

Lud. Your sister will not find,
When you are dead, a bulwark in your grave.
Where will she find a guardian arm?—thine arm
Will be the food of the consuming worm,
While in the hot embraces of the king—

Col. I did not think on that.

Lud. But I perhaps mistake you all this while—
You have better thought upon the dignity
He means your house.

Col. You do not dare—

Lud. I dare to tell you this—
Who can forgive such injury as thine,
Hath half consented to it.—“How is it
“The glorious resolve hath cooled within thee?
“Hath anything befallen that should have blown
“On the red iron of thy heated wrath,
“And steeped thee back to meekness?”—Was the touch
Of his warm amorous hand, wherein he palmed
Her struggling fingers, ice upon your rage
When he did tread upon her yielding foot
Beneath the cloth of gold—

Col. If I had seen it,
He had not lived an instant!

Lud. When you turned,
 He flung his arms around, and on her cheek
 He pressed his ravenous lips!—'Sdeath, sir, consider—
 You pray the King of Naples to your roof,—
 You hail his coming in a feast that kings
 Could scarce exceed in glory—It is blown
 Through all the city, that he sleeps to-night
 Within your sister's bed; and, it is said,
 That you, yourself, have smoothed the pillow down.

Col. Where is he? let me see him who presumes
 To think the blasphemy.

Lud. Behold him here!

I, sir—yes, I—Ludovico, dare think
 With every man in Naples, if the king
 Should leave your roof with life, that he has tasted
 The fruit he came to pluck.

Col. No more—no more—
 He perishes, Ludovico!

Lud. That's well—

I am glad to see you pull into your heart

[*Crosses and takes up the dagger.*

Its brave resolve again—and if there be
 Aught wanting to confirm thee, think, Colonna,
 Think that you give your country liberty,
 While you revenge yourself!—Go, my Colonna—
 Yonder's the fated chamber—plunge the steel

[*Gives the dagger to Colonna.*

Into his inmost heart, and let the blood
 Flow largely.

Col. I'll call to thee when it is done.

Lud. Hark thee! he'll cry for life—and well I know
 The pleading for existence may have power
 Upon thy noble nature—then, Colonna,
 Drown every shriek with chaste Evadne's name,
 And stab him as thou criest it!

[*Exit, R. U. E.*

[*Colonna advances towards the chamber door, c.*

Col. I will do it!—he dies!

[*Pushes the door, and finds, from his agitated condition, that it is difficult to move.*

"I can scarce move the door—it will not yield!

"It seems as if some mighty hand were laid

"Against it to repel me."

[*Voice exclaims, L. U. E.*] Hold !

Col. [*Starting.*] It was only
My thought informed the air with voice around me—
“Why should I feel as if I walked in guilt,
“And trod to common murder”—he shall die !
Come, then, enraging thought, into my breast,
And turn it into iron !

[*Voice, L. U. E.*] Hold !

Col. It shot
With keen reality into mine ear.
A figure in the shadow of the moon,
Moves slowly on my sight.
What art thou ?

EVADNE advances, L. U. E., from behind the Statues.

Eva. My brother !

Col. How, my sister !
Come you across my purpose ?

Eva. From my chamber
That to the great hall leads, I did behold you,
In dreadful converse with Ludovico.—
Your looks at the banquet did unto my fears
Forbode no blessed issue, for your smiles
Seemed veils of death, and underneath your brows
I saw the silent furies.—“Oh, Colonna,—
“Thank heaven, the safety of Vicentio
“Has given me power to watch your dangerous steps !”
What would you do ?

Col. Get thee to rest.

Eva. Is that high front, Colonna,
One to write Cain upon ?—Alas, Colonna,
I did behold you with Ludovico,
By yonder moon, and I as soon had seen thee
Commune with the great foe of all mankind—
What wouldst thou do ?

Col. Murder !

Eva. What else, Colonna,
Couldst thou have learned from Ludovico ?

Col. In yonder chamber lies the king—I go
To stab him to the heart !

Eva. 'Tis nobly done !
I will not call him king—but guest, Colonna—

Remember, you have called him here—remember,
You have pledged him in your father's golden cup;
Have broken bread with him—the man, Colonna—

Col. Who dares to set a price upon my life—
What think'st thou 'twas?

Eva. I think there's naught too dear
To buy Colonna's life.

Col. 'Twas a vast price
He asked me, then—you were to pay it, too—
It was my Evadne's honour.

Eva. Ha!

Col. He gives my life upon condition—Oh, my sister,
I am ashamed to tell thee what he asked.

Eva. What! did he?"

Col. Thou dost understand me now?
Now, if thou wilt, abide thee here, Evadne,
Where thou mayest hear his groan. [Going in.]

Eva. Oh! my dearest brother,
Let not this hand, this pure, this white, fair hand,
Be blotted o'er with blood.

Col. [*Aside.*] How is this? She seems
To bear too much of woman in her heart;
She trembles—yet she does not shrink—her cheek
Is not inflamed with anger, and her eye
Darts not the lightning!

Is it possible
She has taken the sinful wish into her heart?
By heaven, her pride is dazzled at the thought
Of having this same purple villain kneel,
And bend his crown before her—She's a woman!
Evadne!

Eva. Well?

Col. The king expects me to
Conduct you to his chamber—Shall I do so?

Eva. I prithee, be not angry at my prayer—
But bid him come to me.

Col. What, bid him come to thee?

Eva. And leave me with him here.

Col. What! leave thee with him?

Eva. Yes, I implore it of thee—prithee, Colonna,
Conduct my sovereign here.

Col. [*Aside.*] Yes—I will try her—

I know not what she means, but, hitherto,
I deemed her virtuous. If she fall, she dies.
I'll here conceal myself, and if in word
She give consent, I'll rush upon them both
And strike one heart through the other.

Era. Send him to me.

Col. [*Aside.*] There's a wild purpose in her solemn
eye—

I know not if 'tis sin, but I will make
A terrible experiment.—[*Aside.*] What, ho!
My liege, I bear fulfilment of my promise—
Colonna bears Evadne to your arms!

Enter the KING from the chamber, M. D.

King. Colonna, my best friend, how shall I thank thee?
But where is my Evadne?

Col. There, my lord!

King. Colonna, I not only give thee life,
But place thee near myself; henceforth thou wilt wear
A nobler title in thy family,—
And to thy great posterity we'll send
My granted dukedom.

Col. Sir, you honour me.

My presence is no longer needed here.

[*Aside.*] A word's consent despatches them!

[*Conceals himself behind the pillars, R U E.*]

King. My fair Evadne! lay aside thy sad
And drooping aspect, in this hour of joy!
Stoop not thy head, that like a pale rose bends
Upon its yielding stalk—thou hast no cause
For such a soft abashment, for be sure
I'll place thee high in honour.

Era. Honour, sir!

King. (R.) Yes; I'll exalt thee into dignity,
Adorn thy name with titles—All my court
Shall watch the movement of thy countenance,
Riches and power shall wait upon thy smile,
And in the lightest bending of thy brow,
Death and disgrace inhabit.

Era. And, my liege,
That will inhabit my own heart?

King. My love!

Come, my Evadne—what a form is here !
 The imaginers of beauty did of old
 O'er three rich forms of sculptured excellence
 Scatter the naked graces ; but the hand
 Of mightier nature hath in thee combined
 All varied charms together.

Era. You were speaking
 Of sculpture, sir—I do remember me,
 You are deemed a worshipper of that high art.
 Here, my lord, [Pointing to the Statues,
 Is matter for your transports !

King. Fair Evadne !
 Do you not mean to mock me ? Not to gaze
 On yonder lifeless marbles, did I come
 To visit you to-night, but in the pure
 And blue-veined alabaster of a breast,
 Richer than heaves the Parian that has wed
 The Florentine to immortality.

Era. You deem me of a light, capricious mood,
 But it were hard if (woman as I am)
 I could not use my sex's privilege—
 Though I should ask you for yon orb of light,
 That shines so brightly, and so sadly there,
 And fills the ambient air with purity—
 Should you not fain, as 'tis the wont of those
 Who cheat a wayward child, to draw it down,
 And in the sheeted splendour of a stream
 To catch its shivering brightness !—It is my pleasure
 That you should look upon these reverend forms
 That keep the likeness of mine ancestry—
 I must enforce you to it !—

King. Wayward woman !
 What arts does she intend to captivate
 My soul more deeply in her toils ?

Era. Behold ! [Going to a statue, R. S. E
 The glorious founder of my family !
 It is the great Rodolpho !—Charlemagne
 Did fix that sun upon his shield, to be
 His glory's blazoned emblem ; for at noon,
 When the astronomer cannot discern
 A spot upon the full-orbed disk of light,
 'Tis not more bright than his immaculate name !

With what austere and dignified regard
He lifts the type of purity, and seems
Indignantly to ask, if aught that springs
From blood of his, shall dare to sully it
With a vapour of the morning!

King. It is well;

His frown has been attempered in the lapse
Of generations, to thy lovely smile.—

I swear, he seems not of thy family.

My fair Evadne, I confess, I hoped
Another sort of entertainment here.

Eva. Another of mine ancestors, my liege—

[*Pointing to a statue* L. U. E

Guelfo, the murderer!

King. The murderer!

I knew not that your family was stained
With the reproach of blood.

Eva. We are not wont

To blush, though we may sorrow for his sin,
If sin indeed it be. His castle walls

Were circled by the siege of Saracens,—

He had an only daughter, whom he prized

More than you hold your diadem; but when

He saw the fury of the infidels

Burst through his shattered gates, and on his child

Dishonour's hand was lifted, with one blow

He struck her to the heart, and with the other,

He stretched himself beside her.

King. Fair Evadne,

I must no more indulge you, else, I fear,

You would scorn me for my patience; prithee, love,

No more of this wild phantasy!

Eva. My liege,

But one remains, and when you have looked upon it,

And thus complied with my request, you will find me

Submissive to your own. Look here, my lord,—

Know you this statue? [*Pointing to a statue*, L. S. E.

King. No, in sooth, I do not.

Eva. Nay—look again—for I shall think but ill

Of princely memories, if you can find

Within the inmost chambers of your heart

No image like to this—look at that smile—

That smile, my liege—look at it!

King. It is your father!

Eva. [*Breaking into exultation.*]

Ay!—'tis indeed my father!—'tis my good,
Exalted, generous, and god-like father!
Whose memory, though he had left his child
A naked, houseless roamer through the world,
Were an inheritance a princess might
Be proud of for her dower! It is my father!
Whose like in honour, virtue, and the fine
Integrity that constitutes a man,
He hath not left behind him! there's that smile,
That, like perpetual day-light, shone about him
The clear and bright magnificence of soul!
Who was my father?

[*With a proud and conscious interrogatory*

King. One, whom I confess
Of high and many virtues.

Eva. Is that all?

I will help your memory, and tell you, first,
That the late King of Naples looked among
The noblest in his realm for that good man,
To whom he might intrust your opening youth,
And found him worthiest. In the eagle's nest,
Early he placed you, and beside his wing
You learned to mount to glory! Underneath
His precious care you grew, and you were once
Thought grateful for his service. His whole life
Was given to your uses, and his death— [*King starts*
Ha! do you start, my lord? On Milan's plain
He fought beside you, and when he beheld
A sword thrust at your bosom, rushed—it pierced him
He fell down at your feet,—he did, my lord!
He perished to preserve you!—[*Rushes to the statue.*]—

Breathless image,

Although no heart doth beat within that breast,
No blood is in those veins, let me enclasp thee,
And feel thee at my bosom.—Now, sir, I am ready—
Come and unloose these feeble arms, and take me!—
Ay, take me from this neck of senseless stone,—
And to reward the father with the meet
And wonted recompense that princes give—

Make me as foul as bloated pestilence,
As black as darkest midnight, and as vile
As guilt and shame can make me.

King. She has smitten
Compunction through my soul!

Eva. Approach, my lord!
Come, in the midst of all mine ancestry,
Come, and unloose me from my father's arms—
Come, if you dare, and in his daughter's shame,
Reward him for the last drops of the blood
Shed for his prince's life!—

King. Thou hast wrought
A miracle upon thy prince's heart,
And lifted up a vestal lamp, to show
My soul its own deformity—my guilt!

Eva. [*Disengaging herself from the statue.*]
Ha! have you got a soul?—have you yet left,
Prince as you are, one relic of a man?
Have you a soul?—He trembles—he relents—
I read it in the glimmering of his face;
And there's a tear, the bursting evidence
Of nature's holy working in the heart!
Oh, heav'n, he weeps! my sovereign, my liege!
Heart! do not burst in ecstasy too soon!
My brother! my Colonna!—hear me—hear!
In all the wildering triumph of my soul,
I call upon thee! [*Turning, she perceives Colonna advancing from among the statues, R. U. E.*]
There he is—my brother!

Col. (c.) Let me behold thee,
Let me compress thee here!—Oh, my dear sister!
A thousand times mine own!—I glory in thee,
More than in all the heroes of my name!—
I overheard your converse, and methought
It was a blessed spirit that had ta'en
Thy heavenly form, to show the wondering world
How beautiful was virtue!—[*To the King.*] Sir,—

Eva. (L.) Colonna,
There is your king!

Col. 'Thou hast made him so again!
Thy virtue hath recrowned him—and I kneel
His faithful subject here!

King. (R.) Arise, Colonna!
 You take the attitude that more befits
 The man who would have wronged you, but whose heart
 Was by a seraph called again to heaven!
 Forgive me!

Col. Yes, with all my soul I do!
 And I will give you proof how suddenly
 You are grown my prince again.—Do not inquire
 What I intend, but let me lead you here,
 Behind these statues.—

[*Places the King behind the Statues, R. U. E.*
Retire, my best Evadne! [Exit *Evadne, L.*
Ho! Ludovico!
 What, ho! there!—Here he comes!

Enter LUDOVICO, L.

Ludovico,
 I have done the deed.—

Lud. He is dead?

Col. Through his heart,
 E'en as thou badest me, did I drive the steel,
 And as he cried for life, Evadne's name
 Drowned his last shriek!

Lud. So!

Col. Why, Ludovico,
 Stand you thus rapt? Why does your bosom heave
 In such wild tumult? Why is it you place
 Your hand upon your front? What hath possessed you?

Lud. [*With a strong laugh of irony.*] Fool!

Col. How is this?

Lud. So, thou hast slain the king?

Col. I did but follow your advice, my lord.

Lud. Therefore, I call ye—fool!—From the king's
 head,

Thou hast taken the crown, to place it on mine own!
 Therefore I touched my front, for I did think
 That, palpably, I felt the diadem
 Wreathing its golden round about my brow!
 But, by you heaven, scarce do I feel more joy
 In climbing up to empire, than I do
 In knowing thee my dupe!

Col. I know, my lord,
 You bade me kill the king.

Lud. And since thou hast slain him,
Know more—'twas I that first within his heart
Lighted impurity;—'twas I, Colonna,—
Hear it—'twas I that did persuade the king
To ask thy sister's honour, as the price
Of thine accorded life!

Col. You?—

Lud. Would'st hear more?
To-morrow sees me king! I have already
Prepared three thousand of my followers
To call me to the throne—and when I am there,
I'll try thee for the murdering of the king,—
And then—What, ho, there! Guards!—then, my good
lord,
When the good trenchant axe hath struck away
That dull and passionate head of thine—What, ho!—

Enter OFFICER and eight GUARDS, R.

I'll take the fair Evadne to mine arms,
And thus—
On yonder traitor seize!—
With sacrilegious hand, he has ta'en away
The consecrated life of majesty,
And—

The KING comes forward in C., R. U. E.

What do I behold? is not my sense
Mocked with this horrid vision,
That hath started up
To make an idiot of me?—is it not
The vapour of the senses that has framed
The only spectacle that ever yet
Appalled Ludovico?

King. Behold thy king!

Lud. He lives!—I am betrayed—but let me not
Play traitor to myself:—befriend me still,
Thou guarding genius of Ludovico!
My liege, my royal master, do I see you
Safe from the plots of yon accurséd traitor?
And throwing thus myself around your knees,
Do I clasp reality?

King. Traitor, arise!

Nor dare pollute my garment with a touch!
I know thee for a villain!—Seize him, Guards!

Lud. [*Drawing his sword.*] By this right arm, they dare
not—this right arm,
That to the battle oft hath led them on,
Whose power to kill they know, but would not feel!—
I am betrayed—but who will dare to leap
Into the pit wherein the lion's caught,
And hug with him for death? Not one of this
Vile herd of trembling wretches!
[*To King.*] Thou art meet alone to encounter me,
And thus, in the wild bravery of despair,
I rush into thy life!

[*Colonna intercepts and stabs him—he falls.*
Colonna, thou hast conquered.

Oh, that I could,
Like an expiring dragon, spit upon you!—
That I could—thus I fling the drops of life
In showers of poison on you—May it fall
Like Centaur-blood, and fester you to madness!
Oh! that I could—

[*Grasps his sword, and, in an effort to rise, dies.—Shouts
without, R. U. E.*

[*Voices without.*] Vicentio! The lord Vicentio!

*Enter VICENTIO, R.—Evadne, as she comes forward, utters
a shriek of joy, and rushes to his arms.*

Vic. And do I clasp thee thus? Oh, joy unlooked-

Eva. Vicentio! my brother, too!

King. Thou hast a second time preserved thy prince!
Fair Evadne,
We will repair our injuries to thee,
And wait, in all the pomp of royalty,
Upon the sacred day that gives thy hand
To thy beloved Vicentio!

Col. And the nuptials
Shall at the pedestal be solemnized,
Of our great father!

Eva. And ever, as in this blest moment, may
His guardian spirit, with celestial love,
Spread its bright wings to shelter us from ill,

With nature's tenderest feelings looking down,
Benignant on the fortunes of his child !

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF
THE CURTAIN.

OFFICER.	LUDOVICO'S BODY.	GUARDS.	
COLONNA.	VICENTIO.	EVADNE.	KING
R.]			[L.

THE END

